



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19th October 2011 at Naphill Village Hall, Naphill HP14 4
COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 13.05PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Member	Appointing Body
Appointed by Local Authorities	
Cllr David Barnard	North Herts District Council
Cllr Marion Mustoe	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr David Nimmo Smith	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Brian Norman	Three Rivers District Council
Cllr Richard Pushman	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Ian Reay	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Chris Richards	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr Jeremy Ryman	Chiltern District Council
Cllr Bill Storey	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Dave Taylor	Luton Borough Council
Cllr Alan Walters	South Buckinghamshire District Council

Appointed by the Secretary of State	
Mike Fox (Chairman)	Secretary of State
Bettina Kirkham	Secretary of State
Kevin Mayne	Secretary of State
Dr Simon Mortimer	Secretary of State
Ray Payne	Secretary of State
Helen Tuffs	Secretary of State

Elected by Parish Councils	
Cllr John Griffin	Oxfordshire
Cllr Margaret Jarrett	Hertfordshire
Cllr Shirley Judges	Buckinghamshire
Cllr Barbara Wallis	Buckinghamshire
Cllr Julia Wells	Oxfordshire

Officers	
Deirdre Hansen	Clerk to the Board
Steve Rodrick	CCB Chief Officer
Chris Smith	CCB Finance Officer
Colin White	CCB Planning Officer

33. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Dr. Heather Barrett-Mold, Kevin Payne and Cllr Mary Goldsmith

34. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

35. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman after the following amendments were made:

item 22.1: at the end of the sentence” of which £21,000 was related to core activities” was added.

Item 23: in the 1st sentence “Executive” was omitted.

Item 25.3: in the final sentence “Environmental was added before Impact Assessment.

Item 29: BCC was replaced by Buckinghamshire County Council

36. Matters Arising

1. Launch date for Chilterns Gateway Project not yet known.
2. Launch date for the “Caring for the Chilterns Fund” will not be the end of 2011, a more realistic date spring 2012.

37. Public Question time

No members of the public were present.

38. Report from the Executive Committee

The members received the report of the Chief Officer

At its meeting on 13th September the Executive Committee:

1. Received a report on the financial position to the end of August.
2. Reviewed the Risk register.
3. Discussed the medium term financial Plan.
4. Approved a revision to the Reserves Strategy. The Development Reserve is new and will be in place to support larger projects.
5. Reinstated the allowances for members of the Sustainable Development Fund.
6. Discussed the potential mechanisms for reviewing members’ allowances.
7. Noted that funding support has been requested from all Town and Parish Councils, 14 responses to date of which 7 positive.

- 1. The Board NOTED the matters discussed by the Executive Committee and the decisions made under delegated authority.**

39. Report from the Planning Committee

Members received the report from the Planning officer, the purpose of which was to bring to the attention of the Board the items considered by the Planning Committee and the decisions taken under delegated powers. The following was noted:

1. The Chilterns AONB Planning Forum will take place 18th November 2011 at Aylesbury Vale DC's Gateway offices.
2. The Planning Conference had been well attended.
3. Proposed student research project: implications of internet land sales. This is now ready to start. The Chief Officer noted that the Board had been slow to make use of its numerous and varied contacts with research establishments, but should endeavour to do so more in the future.
4. The Committee was informed of Development Plan Responses made under delegated powers and planning applications on which the Board had been consulted on.

- 1. The Board NOTED the report from the Planning Committee.**

10.40 Cllr Shirley Judges joined the meeting

40. Annual Return

The Finance Officer reported that the Audit Commission had completed their audit of the Board's accounts for 2010-11 and signed the Annual Return. The Board had been advised that there were no matters which required them to raise issues arising from the Accounts.

The Finance Officer was congratulated on his management of the accounts and the presentation of the financial reports to the Board. They proved very helpful to the Board.

- 1. The Board APPROVED and ACCEPTED the audited Annual Return for 2010-11.**

41. Review of Members Allowances.

The Chief Officer advised the Board of the proposed review mechanism, the suggested terms of reference and the suggested membership of the review panel.

It was suggested that a review panel is appointed every 5 years made up of an independent member, a Human Resources member and the Finance Officer. The SDF panel allowances would also be included in the review.

The panel terms of reference would include the relationship with any annual cost of living award to staff.

It was considered that the cost of a review panel would be in the order of £2,000.

Conservation Board Members' Allowance 2011-2012

Allowance	£ per head	Total £
Basic	660	17,820
Chairman of the Board	2202	2,202
Vice-Chairman of the Board	550	550
Committee members	550	9,900
Chairman of a committee(2)	824	1,648
SDF Panel	550	3,024
Total		35,144

1. **The Board APPROVED the proposed terms of reference**
2. **The Board APPROVED the proposed membership of an independent review panel.**
3. **The Board NOTED the likely cost of the review.**
4. **The Board RESOLVED that the panel prepare a review for 2013-14.**

42. Submission on National Planning Policy Framework

The Planning Officer reported the key highlights in the Government published Draft National Planning Policy Framework which will replace current Planning Policy and Minerals Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes. The policy texts have been significantly reduced, but some important details have been lost. In particular in connection with protected landscapes. The proposed response had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. Members commented on the draft responses and made some observations.

1. **The Board APPROVED the proposed response to the Draft National Planning Policy Framework consultation.**

43. Report on Developing a Sustainable Framework for UK Aviation: scoping document- Department for Transport.

The Chief Officer reported that the Government is consulting on a proposed framework for the development of aviation which includes assessing impacts of aviation on the environment, local communities and related areas of government policies. It does so in the context of promoting sustainable economic growth as an overriding priority. Many of the objectives for integration of aviation policy with other areas of government policy are of relevance to the proposal for a high speed railway. Some of the aspirations for reducing environmental impacts on local communities and reducing carbon emissions are supportable, but are notably inconsistent with the proposal for HS2.

The Board and many others have argued that all major decisions affecting Transport should be in the context of a National Transport Strategy. Such a national overview

is required in order to enable balanced decisions to be made which require assessment and examination of the relationships between various modes of transport.

11.30 Kath Daly joined the meeting

Members made a number of observations.

1. **The Board APPROVED the proposed submission to the Department for Transport in response to its consultation on proposed aviation policy.**
2. **The Board DECIDED to make a submission to the Department for Transport highlighting the inconsistencies between its approach to aviation and the proposed development of High Speed 2.**
3. **The Board DECIDED to write to MP's with its concerns as it had done for HS2.**

44. Report on the Natural Environment White Paper

Following from the June Board meeting, the Countryside Officer informed members of the Governments White Paper, "*Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature*", on the Natural Environment and the UK National Ecosystem Assessment published early June. The key themes of the White Paper are:

- Protecting and improving our natural environment
- Growing a green economy
- Reconnecting people and nature
- International leadership
- Monitoring and reporting.

The White Paper is a follow up of the Lawton Report September 2010. Particular challenges for landscape scale conservation in the Chilterns include the level of complexity- intricate habitat mosaics, habitat fragmentation, and complex landownership patterns.

Nature Improvement Areas (NIA):

The Board has submitted a Chilterns Chalk NIA application in this competitive national competition announced in the White Paper. The second stage of the application is due Mid-December should the Board's application get to the second round. If the Chilterns proposal is not supported in the NIA competition, it will be important to work with partners to explore whether there are alternative ways of funding elements of the proposals.

Local Nature Partnerships (LNP):

Another initiative announced by the Natural Environmental White Paper. The Board has made 4 applications under this scheme of which 2 have received conditional

offers; (Bucks and Milton Keynes and Hertfordshire) those for Oxfordshire and Bedfordshire were not approved, but they may reapply to the next round. The funding on offer is only to set up the LNP's. The expectation is that they will be financially self-sustaining once established. Board staff expect to work closely with and contribute to the emerging LNPs and continue to work with the existing partnerships in those parts of the AONB not covered by LNPs.

Biodiversity Offsetting:

The White Paper also announced the government's intention to work with local planning authorities and their partners to test biodiversity offsetting in their areas. The CCB has expressed an interest in being a member of the more informal offsetting toolkit Sounding Board. The CCB is looking at best practice, facilitating and informing.

UK National Ecosystem Assessment (UK NEA):

The key messages are that the natural world is critically important to our social and economic well-being but consistently undervalued in the conventional economic analysis and decision making processes.

The Chairman had written to the Rt. Hon. Caroline Spellman, Secretary of State for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs, seeking reassurances that the government will apply this approach to its own activities included HS2.

12.00 David Barnard left

12.05 Helen Tufts left

Members posed questions and comments were made.

- 1. The Board NOTED that an application has been made for a Chiltern Nature Improvement Grant.**
- 2. The Board SUPPORTED the new Local Nature Partnerships in Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire.**
- 3. The Board SUPPORTED the creation of comparable local arrangements for biodiversity in Oxfordshire and Bedfordshire.**
- 4. The Board wishes to maintain an informal link to national proposals to introduce biodiversity offsetting.**
- 5. The Board to SEEK reassurances from the government that it will apply the National Ecosystem Assessment approach to its own activities.**

45. Report on Sustainable Development Fund

The Countryside Officer gave a report on the Sustainable Development Fund applications received and grants awarded. The total fund available for 2010-11 was £45,000 of which £43,207 was paid in grants, with the balance paying for members' allowances and administration.

33 applications had been received in 2010-11 of which 22 were approved. The total value of the projects funded was £203,186, on average SDF grants represented 21% of the total cost of each project. The scheme is well used by local community groups and charities, but business applications are few. Repeat application can pose a problem. The SDF grants provide many opportunities for the Board to maintain a high and positive local profile.

12.30 Roger Emmett and Brian Norman left

- 1. The Board NOTED the report and continued to support the Sustainable Development Fund.**
- 2. The Board would encourage more applications from small businesses.**

46. Report on HS2

The Chief Officer reported that following the formal public consultation phase of HS2 there is a need to decide on the CCB programme for the period prior to the Secretary of State's decision on whether to proceed with HS2. He reported that it has been decided not to challenge the process of consultation.

The members discussed the matter.

- 1. The Board DECIDED to reflect upon its strategy for HS2 for the period until the government makes an announcement on whether it intends to proceed.**

47. Promoting Wood fuel.

The Chief Officer reported that the demand for all types of wood fuel is increasing and is being boosted by the introduction of a Renewable Heat Incentive- a government subsidy. The effect on woods in the Chilterns could be significant as wood fuel markets provide a commercial return sufficient to encourage management of previously neglected woodlands.

- 1. The Board NOTED the growth in the market for wood fuel and its potential benefits for woodlands and woodland owners in the Chilterns.**
- 2. The Board ENCOURAGES the installation of more wood fuel heating systems particular in public buildings.**
- 3. The Board will PROMOTE the new Forestry Commission grant to ensure there is a high uptake in the Chilterns.**
- 4. The Board will ENCOURAGE applications from the wood fuel sector to the Sustainable Development Fund and LEADER programme.**

48. Work Programme Update to September 2011.

1. The Board NOTED the work programme update to September 2011.

49. Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 19 January 2012 location tbc.

50. Dates of Future meetings:

Thursday 29th March 2012, Thursday 21st June 2012, Wednesday 17th October 2012. Locations to be confirmed.

The meeting closed 13.05

The Chairman..... Date.....